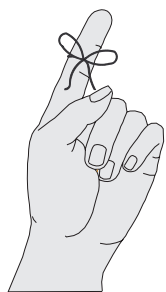


Everyone's response to pain is different. Our goal is to help you manage your pain so you can increase your function. Pain management is a joint effort between you, your family, and your health care providers. Proper pain management results in better mobility and a better quality of life.

Pain-the 5th Vital Sign

Taking vital signs helps your providers know how your body is feeling. Pain levels will now be part of measuring your vital signs. Vital signs that are taken from now on will include:

1. Temperature
2. Pulse
3. Respiration (breaths)
4. Blood Pressure
5. Pain (The 5th Vital Sign)



To help you remember:
Keep a pain diary.

How will my pain be measured?

You will be asked to rate your pain on a Scale from 0 to 10. Zero (0) is the lowest. Ten (10) is the highest. This is what the Pain Scale means:

- 0-1 No pain to just barely noticeable.
- 2-3 Pain is present but you may have to stop and think about it.
- 4-5 You may notice your pain perhaps at rest or during the day.
- 6-7 Your pain is distracting you. You may be gritting your teeth to carry out activities.
- 8-9 It is difficult to think of anything else but your pain.
- 10 Your pain is now the worst you can imagine.

What should you tell your provider?

1. Where does it hurt?
2. When did the pain begin?
3. What does it feel like?
4. How does the pain interfere with your daily routine?

5. What is the highest level your pain has been?
6. What makes the pain better?
7. What makes the pain worse?
8. What level of pain do you think you can live with?

Ways to identify pain

When a patient cannot communicate, caregivers can watch for behaviors that may signify the patient is experiencing pain:

- Facial grimacing
- Moaning, crying or other vocalization
- Body movements (biting, hitting, striking out, resisting being moved, guarding certain areas of the body, continuous rocking)
- Changes in activity level (needing more rest, less social activities, inability to sleep)
- Changes in mood (depression, irritability, withdrawn or confused)

Understanding pain often involves including family members, as well as health care providers. Through this involvement, we can better manage your pain and help improve your quality of life.



Who can you contact for help?

You should contact your primary care provider for an appointment to have a pain assessment done. If they are unable to manage your pain, they will consult the pain management team.

VA health care providers are dedicated to helping you with your pain. Not all painful conditions can be cured but it is our goal to increase your function and quality of life. It is important that you have a realistic plan for pain management.

Who can I call if I need more information?

If you are a VA outpatient, please contact your primary care provider. If you are an admitted/inpatient, please contact the nurse or physician taking care of you.

Albany
(518) 626-5000

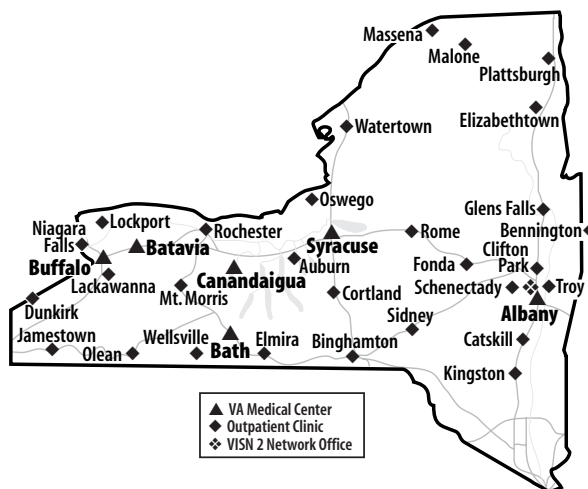
Bath
(607) 664-4000

Canandaigua
(716) 394-2000

Syracuse
(315) 476-7461

VA Western New York Healthcare System
(Batavia) **(Buffalo)**
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